HUNTINGDON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT

UPON THE SANITARY CONDITION

OF THE

BOROUGH of HUNTINGDON

FOR THE YEAR 1897,

BY

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

PRESENTED TO THE COUNCIL MARCH 11th, 1898.

HUNTINGDON:
W. GOGGS, PRINTER.

1898.

To the

Huntingdon Urban District Council.

My Lord and Gentlemen,

I beg to present to you my report as to the Sanitary condition of your Borough during the year 1897.

Births and Deaths.

The births of 119 children have been registered, 67 males and 52 females, making an average birth rate of 26·1 per 100 persons living. Four of these births took place in the Union Workhouse.

The deaths of 96 persons are registered, 64 occurring in the Borough of Huntingdon, 8 in the County Hospital, and 24 in the Union Workhouse. One death in the County Hospital and 7 in the Union Workhouse occurred in persons belonging to the Borough, bringing the number of deaths for the Borough up to 72, an average of 15·8 per 1000 persons living.

Fourteen deaths occurred in children under one year of age, making an infant mortality of 125·0 per 1000 births registered, of these 14 deaths, 8 were from debility from birth, 2 Bronchitis, 2 Diarrhœa, 1 Whooping Cough, and 1 Convulsions.

Prevalence of Zymotic Disease.

Fifteen cases of Infectious disease have been notified to me during the year. Seven of Enteric Fever, 4 of Scarlet Fever, and 4 of Erysipelas.

Enteric Fever.

In two of these cases no cause could be clearly ascertained. Two cases were contracted away from home.

One case was imported, and in the two remaining cases there were sanitary defects existing around the dwelling houses, which I reported to the Inspector of Nuisances who gave orders to have them at once remedied.

A case of Enteric Fever was reported to me from Alconbury in a young man who worked in Huntingdon, in this case I had the well water analysed. It was found to be polluted with sewage matter and an immediate order for the closing of the well was made.

Scarlet Fever.

Four cases of Scarlet Fever occurred ; the first case in October, which could not be clearly traced, but as odd cases had been cropping up in the neighbouring districts, I have no doubt that it arose from some external source of contagion ; this case was at once removed to the Spring House. The second case was imported from Leighton and was treated at the patient's own residence, all care being taken as to isolation and disinfection, no other case arose from this one. The third case was in a member of the same family as the first case but at an interval of more than six weeks. This case was also treated at the patient's own residence with the same care, precautions and result as the previous one. The fourth case occurred at St. Peter's Hill and was moved into the district and placed in the Spring House with the consent of your Authority, which I considered a very proper step to take.

Erysipelas.

Four cases of Erysipelas occurred. In two cases insanitary conditions existed, and were at once remedied. In the two other cases no cause could be clearly traced.

Measles.

There were a few cases of Measles in the early part of the year, one of which proved fatal. I still think it

would be a good plan to notify the first case of Measles occurring in a house, so that means could be taken to stop the spread of the disease at its outset.

Influenza.

Influenza prevailed more or less during the early part of the year and proved fatal in 3 cases.

Diseases of the Respiratory Organs.

Seven deaths from Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy occurred during the year, making an average of 1·5 per 1000. Three of these were in children under 5 years of age.

Phthisis.

Seven cases of Pulmonary Consumption and tubercular disease occurred during the year, making an average of 1·3 per 1000.

Cancer.

Five fatal cases of Cancer occurred during the year.

Diarrhœa.

Three fatal cases of Diarrhœa occurred during the year, 2 of them in children under 5 years of age.

Small Pox and Vaccination.

No case of Small Pox has occurred for some years. Vaccination is efficiently performed and there is no unwillingness on the part of parents to have their children vaccinated.

Re-vaccination is utterly neglected and in the event of Small Pox being imported there would be the risk of a serious outbreak.

Means of preventing Infectious Disease.

The Spring House—Dr Parsons in his report on an outbreak of Scarlet Fever in 1880, in speaking of the

Spring House says : "The site of the hospital is all that can be desired, in an isolated position yet conveniently near the town, and with a good supply of water at hand." Again in 1884 in his Report on a re-inspection of the Borough, says; "The ancient Pest House has been repaired and renovated since my former visit, but no structural alterations have been made to it. Though falling short of modern requirements it is a picturesque and fairly comfortable old cottage in a pleasant situation, and under suitable administration there is no reason why anyone who has no proper facilities at hand for the isolation or treatment of an infectious malady should object to make use of it. It could not, however, be safely used for the simultaneous treatment of more than one kind of disease." Since this report it has been more thoroughly furnished, and has been of great use to the Borough but it is far from meeting all our requirements.

Mr. Fielden in the most generous way, to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, offered to provide an Isolation Hospital for the Borough, to meet all modern requirements and regardless of expense.

This offer was accepted by your Authority, and I much regret that you should not have sought my advice as to situation and as to the means of isolation of different kinds and doubtful cases of disease, more especially as Mr. Fielden expected the whole scheme would have been carried through under my supervision.

As to the situation chosen, I consider it a most unfortunate one, and I think it would be risky to collect together a number of cases of scarlet fever in a building situated within 20 yards of the Cemetery, a place much frequented by people in a depressed mental and bodily condition and so more liable to take infectious and contagious diseases; the Cemetery is also a favourite resort of nursemaids and children.

I think it would be very undesirable to receive Small Pox cases there, and should advise you to keep control of the present Spring House for the reception of those cases only.

As to the accommodation provided I cannot speak, as up to the present time no plans have been submitted to me.

Disinfection.

There is a disinfecting chamber at the Spring House but it is much out of repair, and I have obtained for the use of the Borough an apparatus for disinfection by means of Formic Aldehyde Gas.

The disinfection of the houses in which Scarlet Fever occurred was carried out under my own personal supervision.

Water.

The water supply of the Borough is obtained from the gravel of the Ouse Valley, and is collected by pipes and conveyed into a well, from which it is pumped into a reservoir and distributed over the town by gravitation; there is also a high pressure service to supply some of the houses which stand on high levels. The service to the town generally is constant.

At times of flood some turbidity has been noticed in the water but some repairs effected at the well recently will, I trust, now have remedied this.

Late in the year I obtained your consent to a chemical and bacteriological analysis of the water. This was carried out by the Clinical Research Association and both analyses were highly satisfactory.

The gathering ground in which the pipes are laid is far removed from any means of contamination from sewage pollution or from the soakage of manurial products.

A few wells remain in the town but I hope they will soon all be done away with. Four analyses of well water were made during the year; in two of these the water was condemned and the wells closed, in the other two the water was not of high-class purity but not considered unfit for drinking purposes.

In August last, owing to the continued drought, I circulated handbills freely, urging all persons using well water to have it thoroughly boiled before use for drinking purposes.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.

The sewers are on the whole in a good condition and are repeatedly flushed. They have been well ventilated but I would recommend a regular inspection of all the ventilators at least once during the year. The sewer discharges direct into the river without any kind of treatment being adopted to deal with the sewage; this is now engaging the attention of your Authority. I would again call your attention to the outlet of the sewer at Newtown, which is in a very bad condition.

Removal of Refuse.

This is well carried out, your Authority possessing men, horses and carts of your own.

Pollution of Streams and Water-courses.

All the streams and water-courses in the district are more or less liable to pollution.

Premises regulated by the Sanitary Authority.

Factories and Workshops are not inspected but I believe them to be in a good condition generally.

Schools are regularly inspected.

Slaughter Houses are regularly inspected by your Inspector of Nuisances.

Dairies, Cow Sheds and Milk Shops—These are regularly inspected.

Food Adulteration.

No samples of food have been sent for analysis during the year.

House Sanitation.

Your Inspector of Nuisances is continually on the alert and makes almost daily inspections of houses and premises.

Several old houses have been pulled down and new ones erected in their stead.

Old-fashioned and improper drain traps are gradually being replaced by earthenware gully traps.

The flushing of water closets in the poorer class of houses is not in a satisfactory condition. Flushing tanks are not used in many on account of the thinness of the walls and roofs of the buildings rendering them liable to be frozen through with a very small degree of frost ; in these cases I would advise the adoption of the ash pail closet system, and the regular removal of the excreta by your Authority. Some field ought to be provided for the disposal of excreta, where there would be no likelihood of any water supply being polluted.

Bye Laws.

Your Authority posesses Bye Laws relating to the cleansing of Footways, Pavements, Earth Closets, Privies, Cesspools, &c.; also relating to Common Lodging Houses, and Slaughter Houses.

The Notification of Diseases Act has been in force since 1890 and the Infectious Diseases Prevention Act since 1891.

Public Mortuary.

There is no Public Mortuary and the want of one is much felt.

General Sanitation.

I inspected the whole district in December last with the Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Beresford, and found things generally in a good condition.

I have also made several special inspections as occasion has arisen for my doing so.

I enclose Table A. of deaths during the year 1897, and B of Population, Births, and new cases of infectious diseases.

I have the honour to remain, My Lord and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

HERBERT LUCAS.

Medical Officer of Health.

Sanitary Inspector's Report :—

I have only received 5 complaints during the year and they related to Piggeries and Stables, which were cleansed to my satisfaction.

I make daily inspections of houses and premises and if I find any faulty or defective drains or traps I give orders for the immediate remedy and see that they are carried out.

In the early part of the year I made a special inspection of all houses and drains and had all bell traps removed and other traps substituted.

I had to make complaint against a man for the filthy condition his pigs were kept in ; he was summoned before the magistrates, convicted and fined.

A complaint was made about the smell arising from a ventilator fixed on an adjoining house and the pipe was lengthened.

Eleven drains have been stopped during the year.

I have only issued one notice during the year and that was to fill up a privy vault, which was done under my directions.

I have inspected Cowsheds and Dairys (9 in number) at short intervals and I found the Cow Sheds in good condition and the Dairys and utensils kept very clean.

My inspection of Slaughter Houses (7 in number) was also at short intervals and I generally found them kept very clean, all refuse removed when required.

There are a few ashpits still existing and they are periodically emptied.

House refuse is removed twice each week.

There are 11 earth closets.

There are 10 bakehouses and all kept in good order.

One house was disinfected under my supervision,

K²3. *TABLE OF* **DEATHS** *during the Year 1897, in the Huntingdon Urban District, classified according to* DISEASES, AGES, AND LOCALITIES.

(A)

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purposes of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities. *(Columns for Populations & Births are in Table B.)*	MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES.								MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.											
	At all ages.	under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards		Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhœa and Dysentery.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Influenza.	Injuries.	All Other Diseases.	TOTAL.
HUNTINGDON	64	14	3	1	4	22	20	Under 5			1	1	2		3				11	18
								5 upwds.	1	1			1	6	4	4	3	2	24	46
HOSPITAL	8			1		6	1	Under 5												
								5 upwds.						3		1		2	24	8
WORKHOUSE	24		1		1	6	16	Under 5			1									1
								5 upwds.						2	4					23

K² 11.

(B)

TABLE OF **POPULATION, BIRTHS, AND OF NEW CASES OF INFECTIOUS SICKNESS,** *coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the Year* 1897, *in the Huntingdon Urban District; classified according to* DISEASES, AGES AND LOCALITIES.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics: Public Institutions being shown as separate localities.	POPULATION AT ALL AGES.		Registered Births.	Aged under 5 or over 5.	NEW CASES OF SICKNESS IN EACH LOCALITY COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.			NUMBER OF SUCH CASES REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES IN THE SEVERAL LOCALITIES FOR TREATMENT IN ISOLATION HOSPITAL.
	Last Census.	Estimated to middle of 1897.			Scarlatina	Enteric or Typhoid	Erysipelas.	Scarlatina
HUNTINGDON	4346	4516	115	Under 5				
				5 upwards	4	7	4	2
H HOSPITAL				Under 5				
				5 upwards				
WORKHOUSE			4	Under 5				
				5 upwards				
TOTALS			119	Under 5				
				5 upwards	4		4	2

State here whether "Notification of Infectious Disease" is compulsory in the District,—YES. Since when? 1890. Besides the above-mentioned Diseases, insert in the columns with blank headings the names of any that are notifiable in the district, and fill the columns accordingly. State here the name of the Isolation Hospital used by the sick of the District. Mark (H) the Locality in which such Hospital is situated; and if not within the District, state where it is situated—SPRING HOUSE, SITUATED ON SPRING COMMON.

Area and Population of the District or Division to which this Return relates.

Area in Acres - - - - -			976
Population (last census) - - -			4346
" Estimated to middle of 1897 - -			4546
Death Rates.	General	15·8	per 1,000 Population, estimated to middle of 1897.
	Infant (under 1 year of age)	126·0	per 1,000 Births Registered.